

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please insert the following three new paragraphs before the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 10, to read as follows:

--FIG. 10 shows a side elevational view of a first embodiment of the central portion consistent with the present invention.

FIG. 11 shows a side elevational view of a second embodiment of the central portion consistent with the present invention.

FIG. 12 shows a side elevational view of a third embodiment of the central portion consistent with the present invention.--

Please amend the paragraph bridging pages 3 and 4, beginning at page 3, line 11, as follows:

FIG. 1 shows a first embodiment of container 100. The container 100 may used to display an item 116 for sale. The container 100 comprises a first end cap 102, a second end cap 104, a central portion 106, and a merchandise card 110. The end caps ~~102/106~~ 102/104 may be molded, for example blow molded, and may have a predetermined cross section. Alternatively, the end caps 102/104 may be formed from a metal or any paper product including cardboard. The cross section of the end caps 102/104 may comprises a cross section selected from the group consisting of an oval, a circle, an ellipse, a square, and a polygon. The end caps 102/104 may comprise a groove 102B/104B enclosed inside of a lip 102E/104E. The end caps 102/104 may comprise an opening 102D/104D, for example a slot, for securing a merchandise card 110, upon which in turn is secured an item 116 for sale. Merchandise card 110 also can carry graphics or other information about the item for sale, instructions, etc. The opening 102D/104D is shown as

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a slot extending along a straight line. Alternatively, the opening may be curved. The bottom of the top end cap 102 may comprise a curved surface 102C. Alternatively, the bottom of the top end cap may comprise a flat surface that may or may not be parallel with the top surface of the top end cap. Preferably, the top end cap and the bottom end cap are similarly shaped and interchangeable. Alternatively, the top and bottom end caps 102 and 104 may be different.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 5, as follows:

A 2

The central portion 106 may be formed in a tube from a thin flexible thermoplastic material having a preferred thickness of 0.005 to 0.050". Of course thicker or thinner material may be used depending on the size and/or weight of the container. The central portion 106 preferably is transparent. The central portion 106 may have a cross section similar to the cross section of the end caps 102 and 104 as shown in FIGS. 10, 11 and 12. Ends 106A and 106B of the central portion 106 may fit in the groove 102B or 104B in end caps 102 and 104 respectively. The central portion 106 may be positively coupled to the end caps 102 and 104, as will be discussed below. The central portion 106 may be extruded into its final form or may be formed by rolling or creasing a piece of flexible thermoplastic sheet stock into a desired cross section and gluing or otherwise securing the ends together. The central portion 106 may be formed in any length. A plane formed by the ends 106A and 106B may be perpendicular to the side of the central portion. The ends 106A and 106B alternatively may be other than perpendicular to the sides of the central portion or may have a nonlinear contour.

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